



ANNUAL REPORT

2018



Toal Building—1967



Toal Building and its surrounding parking garage demolition—2018



The Planning Department's new home, 1055 E. Baltimore Pike—2018



Delaware County Council

John P. McBlain, Chairman

Colleen P. Morrone, Vice Chairman

Michael F. Culp

Kevin M. Madden

Brian P. Zidek

County Executive

Marianne Grace

Planning Director

Linda F. Hill

Planning Commission

William C. Payne, Chairman

Thomas J. Judge, Vice Chairman

Kenneth J. Zitarelli, Secretary

Kathy A. Bogosian

Lorraine Bradshaw

Cecile Charlton

Christine Valerio

Introduction

2018 was a year filled with change for the Delaware County Planning Department. We said an abrupt good bye to the Toal Building, our home of 30 years at the Government Center Complex in Media. We have since settled in nicely to our new home located at 1055 Baltimore Pike in Middletown Township. This year also brought changes to our planning team. While we sadly said goodbye to esteemed colleagues, we warmly welcomed new staff, and many familiar faces now have a new role in the Department.

Recognizing that much of our work culminates in publications and documents, this year we initiated a program to provide planning education and best practices in different, more interesting formats to our communities. This initiative, Planning Beyond Paper, seeks to engage local officials and provide planning education in a more interactive manner. I hope that in this past year you or your colleagues participated in a workshop, attended a course in Community Planning, or came out to a meeting in your community to engage with County Planners. If not, you will have an opportunity to participate in our planning education services and outreach in the coming year.

I am pleased to present this report that highlights just some of our work throughout 2018. We have ambitious plans for 2019. To be successful, it will require continued collaboration with our partners – that is something that will never change. We look forward to working with you.



Linda F. Hill
Director

Staff Changes



After 31 years of dedicated service, **Dennis DeRosa** retired from Delaware County Planning Department. Dennis began his career at the County as an Associate Environmental Planner and worked his way up to Manager of the Subdivision and Land Development section. During his tenure, Dennis witnessed profound growth and change in the County's built environment. Dennis played a significant role in guiding municipalities' land use decisions, and his professional wisdom will be missed.

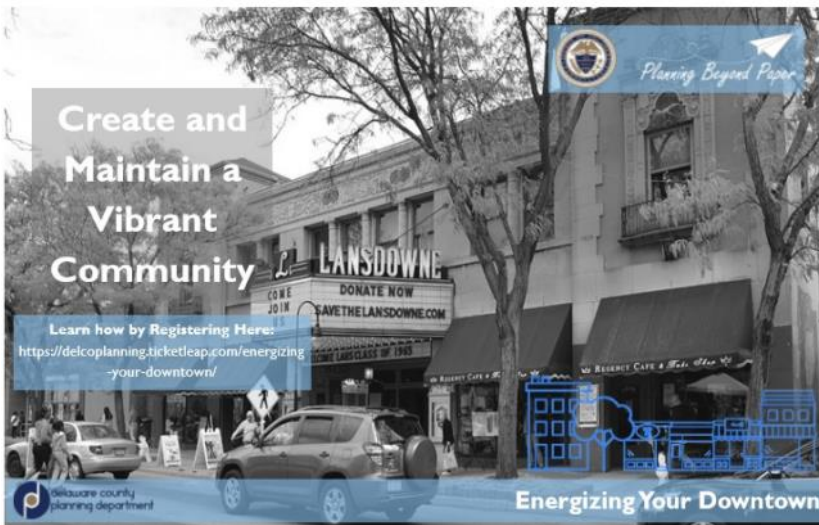


In December, we said farewell to **Justin Dula**, our County and Regional Planning Manager. Over the past 16 years, Justin had a profound influence on planning policy in Delaware County. Justin led development of the County's first adopted Land Use Comprehensive Plan and subsequent component plans. He will be greatly missed, but we wish him continued success as the new Eastern Regional Coordinator in the Office of Environmental Justice for the PA Department of Environmental Protection

Planning Outreach



The planning department sponsored the PMPEI Course in **Community Planning** for planning commissioners, local officials, and others in April. The course covers how to carry out the responsibilities under the PA Municipalities Planning Code. Participants learn how planning fits within the framework of local government and how planning commissioners relate to the governing body, zoning hearing board, and zoning officer. Held at Delaware County Community College, the course was well attended.



In March, the planning department hosted **Energizing Your Downtown**: a discussion on creating and maintaining a vibrant community. The Energizing Your Downtown event brought together speakers from across the region to share their experiences with creating and maintaining vibrant downtowns through innovative approaches and unique partnerships. The next event on Placemaking is scheduled for Spring of 2019 and will be held at the Springfield Township Municipal Building.



Municipal Assistance

Delaware County Planning continued providing professional assistance to municipalities across the County in updating and amending their zoning ordinances. The department completed a full update of the Brookhaven Borough Zoning Ordinance and continued its assistance to Chadds Ford and Thornbury Townships with their zoning ordinances.

Also underway is a zoning ordinance rewrite process with Newtown Township, which may include a new hybrid form-based zoning code. As part of the update, the township conducted a public meeting facilitated by County Planning. Planning staff created a map-based online survey to solicit additional feedback from township residents. In the interactive map, residents could drop points on areas where they would like to see improvements as well as fill out a questionnaire.

Planning Projects

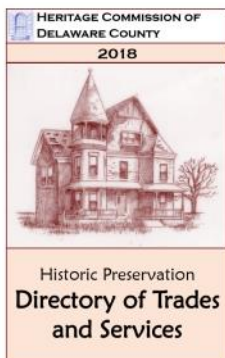
The **Model Zoning Ordinance** serves as a guide for local communities to implement contemporary best practices in zoning for Central Places, which are the main streets and downtowns found throughout Delaware County.

First, we identify the key design features of Central Places and how they help shape visitors' experiences of the community. These features include mixed uses, preservation of historic structures, build-to lines, appropriate building heights, floor area ratios, surface parking design standards, streetscape enhancements, lighting, and others. This is followed by an annotated model zoning ordinance that provides commentary and decision points so that communities can customize the model zoning to their unique needs.

The model ordinance may be adopted by any municipality in the County that contains a Central Place as described in Delaware County 2035, or as defined by the township or borough. The provisions may be adopted in their entirety as a new zoning district, or selectively incorporated into the existing municipal zoning district of a Central Place.



Delaware County 2035 | Central Places
Model Zoning Ordinance



Historic Preservation Directory of Trades and Services

On April 7, 2018, the Delaware County Heritage Commission sponsored its annual seminar, this year's topic was *Maintaining Your Historic Building*.

As a companion to the seminar, DCPD staff assembled a Directory of Trades and Services, which provides a listing of professionals in trades and services that work on historic buildings within Delaware County and the surrounding areas. Its intended audience is both homeowners as well as managers of historic buildings that are undertaking restorations and renovations.



Delaware County Transit Map and Guide

In order to assist County residents in understanding the different SEPTA modes of transit and lines available to them, the Delaware County Planning Department completed the 4th edition of the Delaware County Public Transit Map and Guide, which depicts all bus, regional rail, trolley, and high-speed rail services in Delaware County. It also includes a guide to SEPTA fares and information including the frequency of service, the number of car and bicycle parking spaces at rail stations, fare prices, and on-board bicycle policies.



Planner's Portfolios

The Planner's Portfolios series is an information series on a range of planning related topics. Planners published Issue 16, *Aging in Place*, in 2018.

Parks and Trails



While working on the *County Open Space, Recreation and Greenway Plan (2015)*, it became apparent through the public participation process that residents could not tell the difference between County and municipal parks. The plan recommended that the County develop a signage system to brand County parks. The project, completed in 2018, included a signage manual and a County signage inventory.

The **County Parks Signage Design Manual**, prepared by Simone Collins Landscape Architecture, includes a County Parks system logo, a Mineral Hill Area logo, standardized design criteria for all future signs in County parks, location regulations, construction details, interpretive signage design, projected costs, recommended vendors, and funding sources.

The *County Parks Signage Inventory* includes an inventory (form containing description, photo, condition, recommendations for replacement) of all existing signs in County parks and an identification of signage needs, i.e. future additional signs.



In 2018, the planning department with TPW Design Studios completed the **Master Plan for the Little Flower Open Space** — a 33-acre tract in Darby Borough. As the largest County-owned open space in the densely populated eastern portion of Delaware County, the park will provide opportunities for passive recreation, environmental education, and serve as a trailhead for the Darby Creek Stream Valley Park Trail, a segment of the Darby Creek Greenway, which is part of the Circuit, the regional trail network.

Phase II of the **Chester Creek Trail** aims to extend the existing 2.8-mile multi-use trail along Chester Creek south into Aston Township, an additional 1.5 miles. In 2018, Project funding for design and engineering was achieved through grants from PA DCNR and the DVRPC Regional Trails Program. Wilson Consulting Group was selected to complete all necessary design, engineering, and permitting for Phase II.

In 2018, Phase II of the **Darby Creek Trail** also began its design phase. This will extend the existing 2-mile multi-use trail from Kent County Park in Drexel Hill another ½ mile southeast (downstream) along Darby Creek into Lansdowne, connecting to the Lansdowne Gateway Trail, which begins on the south side of Baltimore Pike. Michael Baker International was selected to complete all necessary design, engineering, and permitting for Phase II. This design phase is funded through grants from PA DCNR and the DVRPC Regional Trails Program.

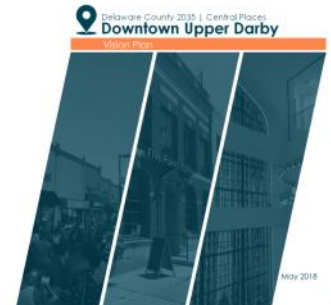
The **East Coast Greenway** Implementation Phase I report involved research into costs for trail development, management, and maintenance. Funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management Program, the report includes sections on trail alignment, management, and maintenance including predicted costs and funding.

The **Media-Smedley Connector** would connect three large County Parks (Mineral Hill, Glen Providence, and Smedley) and five municipalities with a bicyclist and pedestrian friendly multi-use trail. The County received a grant from DCNR to prepare a feasibility study for the connector trail. In 2018, DCPD staff researched background data and existing plans for the area, assembled a study committee, and began site visits to the study area in order to prepare a feasibility study.

Downtown Vision Plans

Upper Darby Township

Much of the study area in the *Downtown Upper Darby Vision Plan* was originally developed as a mixed use town in the 1920s and attracted new residents with its regional transit access. Today, the mix of residential and commercial uses continues in many of the original structures. The plan, which is rooted in community input, emphasizes smaller scale projects that can help build momentum to make larger-scale projects more feasible.



VISION STATEMENT

Downtown Upper Darby is a 20th Century success REIMAGINED into a 21st Century LEGACY as the VIBRANT and DIVERSE hub for the regional economy.

The following vision themes were identified during the extensive public outreach process and informed the vision statement of the plan: Tell the Story; Build on Strengths; Curate an Experience; Protect Signature Features; Embrace the Heritage; Foster Local Business; Streamline Access; and Capitalize on Assets.

The plan calls for efforts focused on creating unique experiences along the streetscape for pedestrians, including special events and a mix of stores and restaurants. These types of projects, centered around people and experience, will bring renewed activity and a dynamic feel to downtown Upper Darby.



Prospect Park Borough worked with the Delaware County Planning Department to develop a Vision Plan for the future of downtown Prospect Park—a picture of what it wants to become in the future. The vision takes into account the strengths and assets existing in the community today as well as any challenges it is currently facing.

The public input process revealed a number of themes of what people want downtown Prospect Park to be in the future. The four **Vision Themes** listed here serve as guiding principles for working towards the community vision. An overarching Vision Statement was developed out of the themes.



VISION STATEMENT

Downtown Prospect Park will serve as the “Front Porch” of the community – a lively and appealing gathering point for residents and visitors alike.

VISION THEMES

A **WELCOMING** downtown means that Prospect Park’s small-town character and community feel attract people and businesses to the downtown. Visitors entering the downtown feel a sense of arrival that makes them want to stay and enjoy what the borough has to offer.

A **UNIFIED** downtown means a visually unified downtown, enhanced by efforts to coordinate the style of building design and signage. Traditional commercial buildings are restored and new construction reflects traditional building styles and patterns.

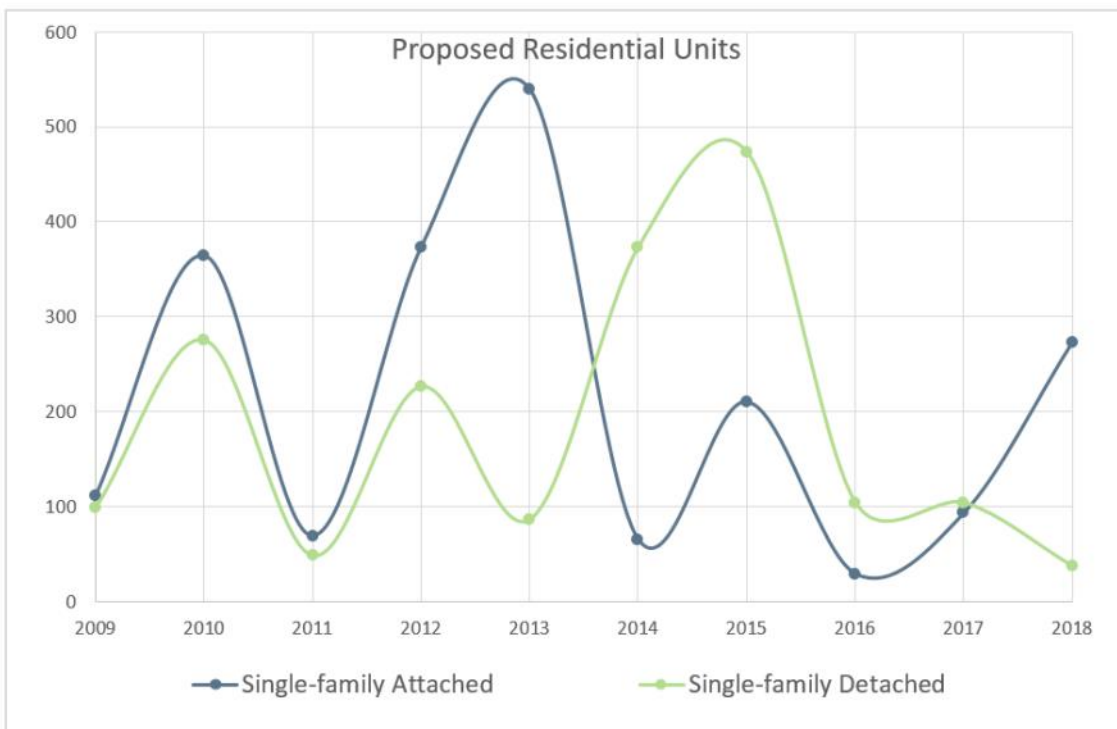
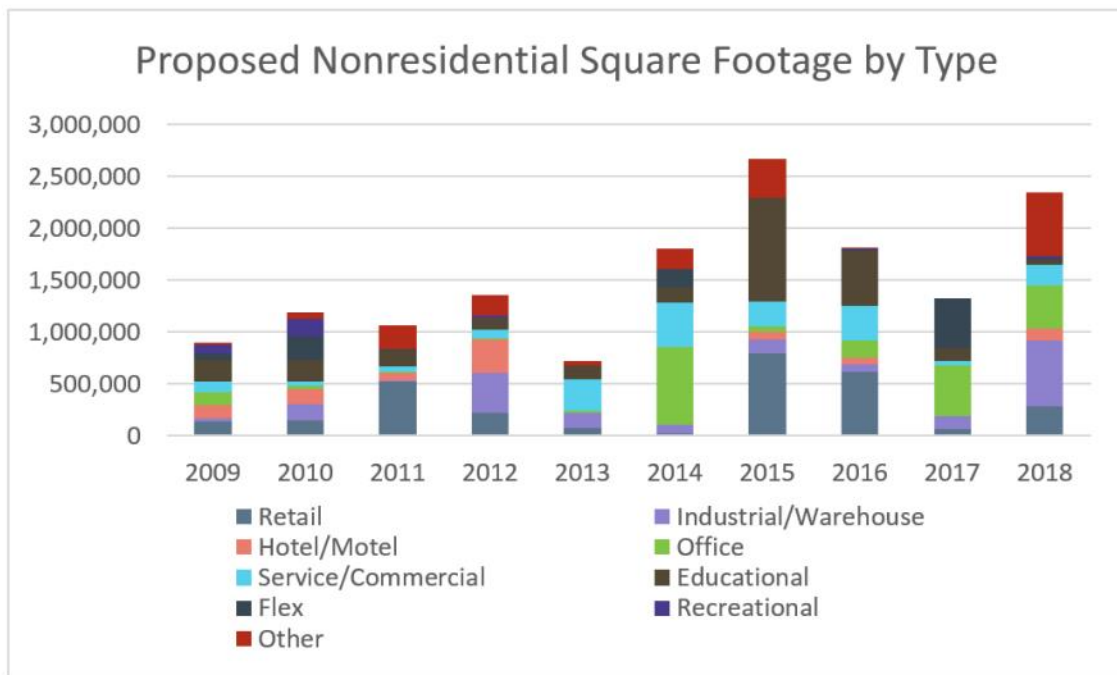
An **EXPERIENTIAL** downtown is one that offers engaging shopping and dining opportunities as well as exciting special events. Prospect Park offers a sense of place and the kind of retail experience that sets it apart from conventional shopping centers.

A **CONNECTED** downtown means that whether walking, biking, driving, or taking the train, visitors to downtown Prospect Park feel safe and welcomed. Sufficient parking in appropriate locations encourages visitors to park once and walk to multiple locations.



Development Trends

In accordance with Pennsylvania Act 247, the Delaware County Planning Department reviewed 57 residential applications, 106 nonresidential applications, and 38 ordinance reviews and presented them to the Planning Commission for action. Non-residential proposed square footage was strong in 2018 totaling 2,342,418 square feet proposed. Much of this proposed development is accounted for by changes in the airport's handling of cargo and in the Penn Medicine development in Newtown Township. Residential units, 311 total, were also high. Single-family attached units continued to rise in 2018 and outnumbered the proposed units of single-family detached units for the first time in five years. Staff also reviewed multiple zoning ordinance amendments regarding medical marijuana production and distribution.



Transportation Improvements Program (TIP)

The TIP is the region's federally-mandated list of projects that will use federal funding during the four-year period. DVRPC, with representatives from the states and the counties, has the authority to decide which projects will receive this funding. Highway, bridge, public transit (SEPTA), bicycle, and pedestrian improvements are included in the TIP. The DVRPC Board adopted the TIP in June 2018, and it includes 50 projects in Delaware County that total \$230 million with additional funding included in a category of projects for multiple counties. Notable Delaware County projects in the TIP include:

- US 322 from Featherbed Lane/Mattson Road to east of PA 452 - \$90.2 million for construction and utility work (additional construction funding is programmed in FYs 2023 and 2024). This project will widen the road to four lanes with a grassy median strip.
- Elwyn to Wawa Regional Rail Restoration of Service - \$151 million for construction. This project will include a new station at Route 1 with a parking garage. Construction began in 2018.
- US 1 and PA 352 Interchange - \$6.5 million for preliminary engineering (funding for construction is programmed in FYs 2027 to 2030). This project is for improvements to the cloverleaf, the Baltimore Pike/Media Bypass interchange, and the US 1/PA 452 intersection.
- I-476 Travel Management - \$8.5 million for engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and utility work (construction is programmed in FYs 2023 to 2026). This project is to enable use of the shoulders during congested periods with signals to indicate if the shoulders are available for use.

Looking Ahead to 2019

Housing Component Plan—The final component plan of Delaware County 2035, the housing plan, is a collaboration between the Planning Department and the Office of Housing and Community Development. Staff completed its public outreach portion including an online survey. The plan is expected to be completed in early 2019.

Transportation Improvements Inventory—In 2018, the Transportation Planning section began developing a Transportation Improvements Inventory by requesting municipalities to submit potential projects that would rectify traffic congestion, safety, or transit/bicycle/pedestrian access issues. The first edition of this inventory will be completed in 2019 and will assist the County and municipalities to prioritize projects for funding through the DVRPC Transportation Improvement Program or other funding programs.

Model Zoning Ordinance for Activity Corridors—In 2018, the department published the *Model Zoning Ordinance for Central Places*. Activity Corridors differ from the other types of Central Places, which are described as downtowns and main streets, in that they are linear-shaped places flanking major transportation corridors or highway interchanges with intense development. Zoning laws that support appropriate projects and enhance people's desired experiences in these areas will differ from those of the other types of Central Places, so the department will create a model zoning ordinance specifically for Activity Corridors.

Countywide Zoning Map—In 2018, staff made significant strides towards its first complete countywide zoning layer in GIS. It contains the zoning map designations for all 49 municipalities in Delaware County. Ultimately, the zoning layer will be shared online in an interactive web map.

322 Corridor Study—The *Upper Chichester Township – U.S. Route 322 Corridor Study* is a land use and development plan for the U.S. Route 322 corridor in Upper Chichester Township. The study examines the proposed design and potential impacts to the township of the PennDOT *Conchester Highway Improvement Project* - a phased, multi-year highway capacity enhancement program for Route 322 - and provides a plan for growth and revitalization of the corridor during and through project completion.

Bates Award 2018 Recipients



Chester Charter School for the Arts

This K-12 Charter School is a state of the art educational institution with a three-story massing scheme, a creative mix of metal panel and glass materials and bold integration of the school's flag ship red color. The overall aesthetic of the building strongly reflects its urban context.



Edgmont Township Community Park

A three-acre park offering a large play-set with slides and activities for kids of all ages. Strong sustainable design principles include green stormwater infrastructure in the form of an infiltration stone bed. The Community Park boasts generous native tree and shrub plantings and thoughtful placement in the community. There is plenty of parking and full ADA access to the site.



Clem Macrone Park Redevelopment

A nine-acre park in Garrett Hill was redeveloped to deliver attractive active recreation opportunities for residents. New to this redesigned area is a walking path that spans the entire footprint of the park equipped with bike racks and benches. Features include basketball, tennis/pickleball courts and playground. Facilities such as a parking lot and a war memorial make this a destination park. Buildings like the comfort station were carefully sited to take advantage of sun exposure and prevailing breezes.



Lansdowne Landing

An attractive gathering spot for residents and visitors in a downtown setting. This pocket park features a mural designed by a Penn Wood High School graduate that references the town's iconic Lansdowne Theater. Strong design principles are evident as this parking lot is transformed into a refreshing oasis for the community where neighbors can come together formally and informally in downtown Lansdowne. It includes amenities derived from recycled and sustainable materials, such as pallet wood for bike racks and a rain barrel system for watering plants and vegetation.



Outstanding Planning Education Achievement Award

The Outstanding Planning Education Achievement Award recognizes officials demonstrating a commitment to planning education by completing all four of PMPEI's core courses. We are proud to recognize Concord Township Resident Richard Julason for his accomplishment and would like to congratulate Richard on this honor.